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# The Decorator and Furnisher.

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## CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

	PAGE
Art Notes.....	By M. F. Harman 135
Art Trades Supplement.....	154
Application of Ornament, The. (7 Illustrations).....	By Lewis F. Day 136
Answers to Correspondents. Designs for a Hand Basket, Wall Pocket, Lamp Mat, Opera Glass Bag, etc.....	153
Complete Kitchen and Pantry, A. (4 Illustrations).....	By K. B. Johnson 130
Ceiling Design.....	By The Boston Designing Co. 138
Editorials.....	124
English Wall-Paper for 1891. Illustration of a Wall-Paper Machine, and 12 Designs for English Wall-Paper.....	143
Home Workshop, The. Illustrations of Carved Box, Leather Hand-Screen, Design for a Chair Back or Cushion, Design for Cushion, Calendar, Writing Tray, Workbox, Chair with Patchwork Stripe, Design for Breaking up the Monotony of a Wall Surface, Design for a Screen to Replace Folding Doors between two Rooms, Two Designs for Painted Panels on Wood, Bamboo Escriptoire, A Moorish Divan.....	150
Illustration of Pictures Exhibited in the Paris Salon, 1891.....	140-141
Modern House, The. Its Furniture and Decoration—V. The Library. Illustrations of Ground Plan of Library, Side of Library opposite Smoking-Room, Side of Library opposite Drawing-Room, Side of Library opposite Garden, Library Ceiling.....	By A. Sandier 126
Mrs. John A. Logan's Home in Washington. Illustrations—Portrait of Mrs. Logan, Hallway in Mrs. Logan's House, Library, Parlor, Drawing Room, and Memorial Window.....	By Hester M. Poole 132
Prize Competition in Interior Decoration.....	123
Prize Design for Adams Library.—Supplementary Drawings.....	By James Thomson 125
Principles of Color, The.....	By Henri Kelly 147
Salon of 1891, The.....	By C. F. King 129
Sideboard and Mantelpiece.....	By The Boston Designing Co. 142

## PRIZE COMPETITION IN INTERIOR DECORATION.

MESSRS. JOSEPH P. McHUGH & CO., Interior Architects and Decorators, New York, with the view of encouraging the study of interior decoration after pure styles, offer six subjects for competition in THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER. The competition began with the October, 1890, issue, which also commenced the seventeenth volume of our journal. A prize of TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS will be paid by the above firm, for the best original design in the following special styles of ornamental construction and decorative treatment:

### LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR COMPETITION.

October, 1890,	- A COLONIAL RECEPTION ROOM.
	Prize awarded to James Thomson, of Boston.
December, "	- AN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE DINING ROOM.
	Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
February, 1891,	- A LOUIS SEIZE DRAWING ROOM.
	Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
April, "	- A ROMANESQUE HALL.
	Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
June, "	- AN ADAMS LIBRARY.
	Prize awarded to James Thomson, Philadelphia, Pa.
August, "	- A LOUIS QUINZE BOUDOIR.

### CONDITIONS.

- 1.—Each competitive design must be 15 inches by 10 in size. The drawing must be executed by the pen in black ink, and sent us flat, not rolled up.
- 2.—Working charts, drawn to a scale, may be sent in lieu of a perspective drawing. At least two charts should be sent showing different sides of the room.
- 2.—Each drawing must be original, and should include suggestions for wall decoration, draperies and furniture, after the style of its period, but adapted to modern construction and requirements.
- 3.—Each drawing must be signed with a *nom de plume*, and accompanied by a letter giving the real name and address of the designer. All designs must be addressed to the Editor of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, 150 Nassau Street, New York, and must reach the office not later than the 15th of the month previous to that for which the competition is announced; thus, drawings for the August, 1891, competition, should reach the Editor not later than the 15th of July, 1891.
- 5.—A committee of decorative artists will decide as to which design is entitled to the prize in each competition, as well as those entitled to honorable mention, and their decision will be final.

## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

ON the opposite page we present our readers with the supplementary drawings of the prize design for an Adams Library, by Mr. James Thomson of Philadelphia.

By referring to the drawing published in our June issue, the reader will find information given therewith as to the manner in which the library is to be furnished and decorated.

THE motive of all beautiful graphic expression springs from fresh vision, wonder and enjoyment, and this is the council we learn from the fragments of by-gone arts, which have survived the decay of time and the destruction of man.

Decorative artists are constantly discussing with themselves the question as to whether they should simply produce sumptuous backgrounds in the manner of such and such a style, keeping rigidly to one plan of work, or should they in the same graphic manner express their sense of the joy of life, or the sorrow of life, or the beauty of life within the limits imposed by their simple means of expression.

One class of decorators say "Be not deceived. You are foolish fellows to think that you can produce anything new in the ancient arts of design. It has all been done before. The designer who most cunningly plies his scissors in the beautiful storehouse of the past is the man who represents the scientific self-conscious art of the nineteenth century."

Another class say "Beware of the scissors. Fresh feeling and perception is the test which decides whether the design is the vital expression or a scientific exercise."

Let us use the methods of the past as a medium, just as the poet of to-day uses the metrical language of tradition to express his present perception of the joy, the sorrow, or the beauty of life. It is good that the poet should be skilled in all methods of versification, but it is not the one thing needful; it is not his center of aim. So for designers, it is good that they should study the best achievements of the past, and thereby learn certain guiding principles, which are true for all time; but the manner of production must first depend on nature, seeing with fresh feeling, or perception.

IT is proposed to establish in the lower part of New York City a museum of decorative art, where artisans and designers for the various manufactures can find specimens of the best work of all ages, together with suggestive books, charts, designs, etc., that will help them to produce something out of the beaten track.

It is also proposed to connect with the museum a school that will teach drawing and give instructions by lectures and recitations. In such a museum as this models of the best work, goldsmith's work, enamels, ivory, leather and wood-carving, silverware, art work in iron, bronze, brass and other metals, pottery, and designs in silks, cretonnes and other textile fabrics, wallpapers, painted tapestry, etc., in fact, examples of every possible form of art as applied to the industries.

New York is, perhaps, the greatest manufacturing center in the United States, and right here is greatly felt the need of such a school and museum. The needs of painters and sculptors are already well supplied in the various Academy schools throughout the city, but none of these institutions propose to teach designers and decorators the much needed information in applying art to objects of utility.

By raising the tone of our manufactures, the country at large is benefited. There is greater progress in art teaching in Boston and Philadelphia than exists in New York, and the city is rich enough to found, not merely a municipal, but a national industrial museum.

A benefactor of his race in London has lately given four hundred thousand dollars for an industrial museum, to be erected on government land, near the South Kensington Museum. London, which already has the South Kensington, finds that that is not enough, and proposes to establish another organization of the same character.

Speaking of industrial museums, we wish to note that a very complete little museum of industrial art exists in the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, being created as a part of that beneficent enterprise. Without such a display of art objects, showing every process of manufacture and decoration, it would be impossible for the Pratt Institute to do anything worthy of the name of Decorative Art.

A BROOKLYN contractor for remodeling, painting and decorating, has hit upon a unique plan for obtaining work, and the plan is eminently successful.

The city of Brooklyn, like the city of New York, is full of

blocks of private residences, which are known as brown stone houses, the houses being as like each other as peas in a basket. The architects who erected these monotonous structures had evidently an idea of a factory or store house in their mind, as their ideal of architecture, and as a general rule the aspect of the house exhibits a stoop of stone steps with iron railings leading to the entrance door. On one side of the door are two windows, both as like the door as they possibly can be, and the house is pierced with three windows on the second and other stories all exactly like the two windows on the first floor, and there is a projecting cornice on the top of the wall.

These features constitute the architectural details of a series of the most unimaginative structures the world has ever seen. The plan adopted by our Brooklyn decorator is eminently in keeping with the growth of decorative ideas that is now taking place all over the country. He addresses a circular letter to the owners of these houses, in which he points out his willingness to alter, remodel, repair and decorate the house for a certain sum. He also refers to a supplementary list of decorative adornments, which can be added, all or any, for certain sums, to the scheme of decoration he proposes. Accompanying the letter is a detailed specification of the change that he proposes to make exteriorly and interiorly upon the house, and this specification is illustrated with a handsome sheet of drawings, giving a perspective view of an ordinary brown stone dwelling adjoining a similar dwelling showing the proposed remodeled front. There are also plans for remodeling the staircase and for building a dining-room extension on the rear vacant portion of the house lot.

The perspective view of the remodeled front shows the stoop with iron railings replaced by a newly built brown stone stoop with solid brown stone side walls, covered with carved brown stone copings. The stoop is made to terminate upon a series of steps that turn right and left from the main steps, so that a perfectly smooth wall fronts the side walk. Instead of the usual breast high railings in front of the basement, there is a low stone coping with brass rails and posts.

The vestibule doors are furnished with beveled plate glass or stained glass, and new style brass plates are added, and there is a cornice over the doorway supported by handsome brackets.

The front of the house is further remodeled by taking out the two lower windows on the first floor with the front wall between the windows, and a large elegant bay window is put up instead. An alternate method of remodeling the front consists in allowing the two first floor windows to remain as they are, and the two windows immediately above these in both the second and third stories are removed with the wall between, and large bay windows are inserted. Above these is erected a pediment in the Greek style on the roof, which gives the house a most elegant appearance.

The next important change in the construction of the dwelling is the extension of the basement into the rear yard, to form a laundry, over which is erected an octagonal dining-room extension with stained glass dome overhead. This two story brick extension is 18 by 20 feet. The dining-room has two twelve feet bay windows on either side, the stained glass dome in the ceiling being 5 feet high and 8 feet across, with a handsome chandelier suspended from the center, and automatic electric lights are placed over the stained glass. The apartment is trimmed in hard wood with parquet floor, and has an Empire or Romanesque mantelpiece. It is properly decorated, heated, and provided with butler's pantry, dumb waiter and stair connection with the basement.

Interiorly the remodeling of the staircase is the next important feature. There is a return landing at the foot with an art screen of fancy fretwork, as shown in the drawings, which produces the effect of a much larger and more pretentious hall than formerly. In connection with these changes there is a complete specification for the decorating, painting, frescoing, trimming, plumbing, and electrical work. The entire overhauling of the house, with its remodeling, improving and decorating, including the building of the new extension as proposed, is to cost four thousand five hundred dollars, which the decorator asserts, if carried out will immediately increase the value of the building at least eight thousand dollars. The scheme is so complete, artistic and gratifying to the householders in Brooklyn, that it is being carried out very largely, and its success proves that the man who makes money nowadays is he who gets out of the beaten track and introduces a novel and attractive idea for the consideration of the public.

We think that people who contemplate selling their old fashioned dwellings might do better to consider the reconstruction of same.



# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

